

## shot thru the heart by cupidintern

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**Summary:**

this is for simon as they often are. he requested this like a year ago and now here it is. this might be the last hargrove fic for me! which is an odd milestone. a bittersweet one. i love the time ive spent with this fandom. wish you all the best <3

## shot thru the heart

### Author's Note:

- For [FlashMountain](#).

this is for simon as they often are. he requested this like a year ago and now here it is. this might be the last harringrove fic for me! which is an odd milestone. a bittersweet one. i love the time ive spent with this fandom. wish you all the best <3

Steve's always been a romantic, he's always liked like, rom coms and love songs and picking out those stupid little teddy bears at the drugstore. He likes having someone to tell he dreamt about them, likes the idea that love is the end-all-be-all.

But he hates Valentine's Day. And maybe it's just this year, you know? Too much, too soon to walk through the doors of Hawkins High and realize that, oh yeah, next Friday is Valentine's day, because pink and red streamers hang from the ceiling, and shitty cut-out hearts with too much glitter glue pepper the walls. But it can't be too soon. Cause it's been, what- three months? One, two, yeah. Three months.

The thought makes him feel heavy all over. Reminds him how all his heart had to be picked up and crammed back into his chest like so many notes shoved into Nancy's locker- "*you look really pretty today* " and "*wanna get lunch?* " and "*hope you're doing okay* " and Steve should stop reminiscing. It just makes him sad when he turns a corner and sees that student government set up the Valentine Grams table right in front of the main office. Right fucking there. So if Steve wants to get to the other *end of the school* he had to walk right past the table of- mostly underclassmen girls, but some very pressed looking guys trying to *live up to expectations* - paying a whopping two bucks just to get a rose and yet another shitty cut out heart delivered to their certain someone.

Steve has two dollars in his wallet- and all the valentines are anonymous. Unless you write your name of course. But Steve's not

going to send one. Because he's *over* Nancy, and she has a boyfriend and because... there's no one else.

Steve thinks he must have a little storm cloud floating over his head the whole way to class, rumbling with every glittery heart he sees. He hates the day, and the two weeks leading up to it, how tired the whole thing makes him, how tired he is all the time now, how his grades just keep getting worse, which he didn't fucking know was possible-

But lately they've actually been a little better.

Okay maybe that's a plus- Steve's grades have been better- but no, wait, no it's not, because the only reason his grades have been on the up is he's been copying homework from *Billy Hargrove* .

Who Steve should stop last-naming because they've been kind of. Fine lately. Acquaintances. Friends, maybe. Not that Steve has any friends to speak of, but Billy lets Steve copy his homework- not even *lets* , he asks every time "you want the answers?" all low, leaning forward from his seat right behind Steve so the teacher doesn't hear. Steve remembers the first time Billy offered, he turned around in his desk so fast to go " Yes , for real?" and Billy handed his over- already complete like they hadn't gotten the handout ten minutes ago. And it was helpful, really it was, but... Steve just hated it. He couldn't think of any other way to describe the feeling- made his guts twist. Like jealousy. Billy finished his homework in class in ten fucking minutes. Billy didn't give a shit about the lesson and still aced every test. Billy apologized in a way that made it hard not to forgive him, harder when he was offering up freebie grade boosts. Charming. Steve hated it. Felt like pity, maybe. Feels like jealousy.

And Steve *hated* Billy's handwriting. It was... perfect. Like a fucking machine did it, evenly spaced, took up the line like it was supposed to, consistent, neat. Legible. Artwork compared to Steve's own chicken scratch- and today was just the same. Billy flicked Steve's shoulder with a "your cut, pretty boy," which Steve wanted to grace with an equally charming answer, but only came up with "Thanks." And there was the perfect handwriting.

*W Hargrove*

02/03/85

## 2nd Period

Steve should have started copying right away, cram as much as possible on to his own stupid page before the bell rang. But he stared at the evenness of the W, the slant of the slashes- like they were perfectly aligned. Bothered him more than usual, that Billy had to be better at everything, even penning words, symbols. Even when he was being nice about it. Really, Steve probably had the upper hand. Billy was being nice to *him* , trying to make it up to *him* , owing *him* a debt. And still, Steve was so... jealous.

He runs out of time before the bell rings, whispers "*fuck me* " under his breath, turns back to hand Billy his homework, but is met with

"Hang onto it." Billy always leans so far back in his desk, slouches down into it so sometimes Steve can feel Billy's boots kick into the back legs of his desk- one time they hit his own nikes. Left a scuff on the heels, startled him awake- *jealousy* .

Steve doesn't respond right away, so Billy speaks again, probably thinks Steve's a fucking idiot- "Finish up. Just give it back before class tomorrow, yeah?"

"Uh, yeah." *Jealousy*- "Sure thing. Thank you."

"Eh," Billy's already getting up. "Don't mention it."

Steve keeps the homework.

-

Steve shoves Billy's perfect handwriting homework in his binder with his own shitty notes and thinks *immediately* that it doesn't belong there. Too good. Too Perfect. Too pretty. Like the tails on Billy's lowercase Gs and Ys- pretty. He thinks of that the whole time he's copying free responses and trying to change the wording just enough so it sounds different- he just dumbs it down, has to guess at what a couple words mean, Billy writes all intellectual-

But actually Steve sort of feels like he learns something. Sort of feels

like he gets it a little better in just the way Billy describes it back to himself. And Billy only did this to be helpful- the extended “I’m really actually sorry” of making sure someone passes at least one of their fucking classes. Steve wonders briefly if Billy would ever like, tutor him or something. Then he shoves that thought right the fuck back where it came from because the pit of what he’s *sure* is jealousy in his stomach fucking *writhes* or some shit when he thinks about being around Billy that much. Even just looking at his handwriting...

Steve takes an extra long, extra think-y shower after he finishes his homework.

-

Steve hands Billy’s work back in the hallway just outside their shared second period. He even waits by the door, a solid two minutes before the bell, leaning against a row of lockers trying not to look at the stupid depression-inducing decor. He’s not-thinking about it so hard that he doesn’t notice Billy until he’s right there, close-

“Aw, you waited for me?” Billy says, mock-sweet, taking his work back out of Steve’s hands.

Steve recovers from his surprise faster. “You wish.”

“Don’t I ever.” Billy’s already walking into class, sorta mumbles that last part. Steve follows him in.

And they don’t talk for the rest of class- there’s no homework. But Steve can feel like he can sense Billy’s presence more again, now. Like before, but somehow worse...

Jealousy is a bitch.

Steve does get the *last* last homework he turned in back, though. This one also copied from Billy, and-

*B-. improving!* Is written at the top of the page. Great, Steve’s improving. Just in time for fucking spring semester of his senior year. And the improvement isn’t even his it’s-

The bell rings. Billy’s up and out of his desk so *fast* his backpack clips

the edge of the adjacent desk as he slings it ever so casually over his left shoulder. Everytime, he's so fast . Like he can't be in any one place too long- like a shark.

*That's a thing right?* Steve thinks. *Sharks. They have to keep swimming or they like, die or something.*

Steve realizes he's just been staring at the door Billy walked out of several moments ago and he blinks. Shakes his head a little, he's spacing out too much.

Then he looks down.

A sheet of note paper lays face up on the floor next to him. *W Hargrove* in its top right corner- more notes.

Steve grabs the sheet of paper off the floor and shoves it into his backpack, before he even really has time to think about what he's doing, why he's doing it- burning hot *something* in the deepest pit of his stomach it's *jealousy* it *has* to be- before getting up and walking out of class.

-

So why did Steve take Billy's notes? Why, to give them back of course.

Billy probably needs it back, this half finished sheet of chemistry bullshit from- *jesus* from October?

Okay, well if Billy doesn't need it back, maybe Steve can just. Keep it. Keep it and stare at it and *hate* every single one of those perfectly lined up conversion equations that he remembers not understanding at all. Billy must be in honors classes, too, because some of it Steve *doesn't* remember. He spends way too much time looking at it when he gets home, sits down at his desk, ignores every fucking thing else in his backpack and pulls just the sheet out.

*W Hargrove*

10/20/84

The W is so even. It makes Steve's blood boil. And all the slashes are perfectly parallel- Steve traces his finger under the numbers. He sets his hand on the paper, as if he were holding a phantom pencil, thinks how a past version of Billy traced his hand over this paper just the same way when he took these notes. Steve wasn't sure if he could remember Billy being a lefty or a righty, but he was so *smart*...

Steve took his hand off the paper suddenly, like it had burned him. Something... didn't sit right.

He folded the paper in half once and slid it back into his binder- more carefully than before- and switching to attempting to finish his homework.

-

Billy was a lefty. But technically he was a. Am. Ambiv- nope. The thing! Where you can switch hands. It's- Ambidextrous? Yes. That.

Steve congratulated himself a little for remembering the word, then went back to completely spacing out thinking he could hear the sound of Billy's pencil scratching across his notebook behind Steve in class.

He did not pay attention at all, the whole day, the warm red feeling making his skin tingle and his feet itch like he had to walk somewhere. He got up to use the bathroom twice in the same class period, which the teacher wasn't too happy about, but whatever. Fuck her. She didn't have to sit in front of Billy and look at his perfect notes every time he found himself looking over his shoulder to check the time.

"What's got you tweaking?" Billy's voice snaps Steve out of his trance.

"What?" Steve looks over his shoulder again, this time directly at Billy, who's looking directly back at him, which makes him feel like his brain got left out in the sun.

"Tah-week-ing." Billy says again, slower like he's letting Steve catch up, stupid Californian drawl.

“Oh just. Uh. Just nervous.”

“Test isn’t for another two weeks, pretty boy.”

The warm feeling is back in full force, Steve thinks it must be because of how calm and collected Billy sounds, like he couldn't care less about the test. “Not all of us can be geniuses, okay?”

Billy laughs a little- it's pretty, softer. Steve hates it. “Bold words from someone copying my homework.”

Steve frowns a little, he can't help it, makes to turn back around but Billy catches his shoulder-

“Hey,” Billy starts, hesitates like he's thinking about something

Warm turns to hot, Steve's sweating and he's only in a windbreaker.

“If you need like. Serious help with classwork, you could always borrow my notes.”

Steve blinks. It's a lot nicer of an offer than just letting someone copy off you. A lot nicer than Billy usually is to him. Less of an apology, more of, like, an invitation.

Is Billy trying to be his friend?

“I,” Steve starts “Might take you up on that-”

The teacher shushes both of them. Steve turns back to sitting, facing the front.

God, is he jealous of Billy being able to be *nice* ?

-

Steve staves off actually caving and asking Billy for the notes for as long as he possibly can. Which is like, four days.

He actually needs those notes, for real, because he hasn't been able to write a single fucking thing except the day's date on his paper since.... Since Billy started sitting behind him at the beginning of the



semester. It's just been distracting, okay? That's all.

That's *all*.

And if Steve thinks about this anymore his head is going to literally explode so-

"Hey, Hargrove." Steve catches up to Billy just as they are both leaving class. And he spaces out for a millisecond thinking how every time he thinks about blonde-curly-blue-eyes he thinks Billy, but what he says is 'Hargrove.'

Billy slows, looks over his shoulder a little like he's letting Steve know he's allowed to continue, but he doesn't stop walking. He's a faster walker than Steve, even though Steve's legs are longer. Too long- he feels like a fucking. One of those. Desert-deer things. Antelope? No, a gazelle- it's a gazelle.

"I, uh," Steve realizes he's never actually walked anywhere with Billy before, and has never entertained the possibility, but he started talking, so he may as well keep going. "If you're still cool with it, borrowing your notes would be like, really helpful." Why does he sound so stilted?

"Sure." Billy seems so impartial to the whole thing, but Steve grins, a little relieved.

"Great! Uh, thank you."

"Don't mention it." Billy nudges past him.

Now Steve's standing alone on the sidelines of the main hall. And he feels warm all over again.

-

Steve is sitting at his desk the next day when a small stack of notes gets dropped in front of him- the paper snaps a little against the desk's wood top.

Steve turns around in time to catch Billy sliding into the seat behind him.

"Hey," Steve smiles, tries to think of something else to say like 'thanks again' when Billy goes,

"That's everything I have from this unit. Don't write on them cause I want them back."

"Okay," Steve thinks Billy seems like he's trying to compensate for something. "Thanks again."

Billy shrugs. But he does smile a bit. One of his nothing-matters-I'm-cool smiles.

"Maybe we could study together sometime-" Steve says before thinking about it at all, so it comes out way lower than he means it to so he has to clear his throat and go "If you want."

Steve panics for a split second, something trying to flip over in his chest and he worries Billy's gonna think he was asking something else, is gonna get him all wrong- but-

"If I didn't know better I'd say you were asking me to hangout, Harrington." Billy laughs just a little. A little huff, sharp off his tongue.

Steve looks away, then looks back to Billy. "I mean, sure, yeah."

Steve can swear Billy lights up for a second, smiles a little brighter, sits up more- but then, no. Billy only looks nonchalant again. "Hm. Maybe." Then he looks back at his own notebook. And Steve takes that as a signal that the conversation is Now Over.

He turns back to his desk. Billy's notes are still there.

-

It's days before the test, and Steve is *sure* that Billy's notes would be super helpful if he was actually reading them for clarity and understanding or whatever, but instead he's discovered something entirely different, scribbled in the margins of almost every page; commentary. Billy writes literal commentary, more scrawly and casual than the rest of his legible nites.

Shit like; *“Incorrect date in lecture but who’s gonna notice that certainly not the guy whos supposed to be fucking teaching us this no sir”* and *“just saw a bird out the window”* and *“Five minutes in and you have no idea what’s going on huh?”*

That last one seems a little sweeter than the two before it, though. Like Billy’s talking to someone, other than himself.

Steve loves looking at those notes.

Loves the slopes and slants of the writing. Loves the commentary. Loves the little doodles Billy does in the margins. A knife with a spiraly handle. A skull that’s actually pretty good, could make a good tattoo maybe. Roses- lots of them. All different sizes. And a little heart with an arrow shot through it. Steve didn’t know Billy likes to draw. He’s not half bad. Steve smiles to himself a little. Runs his hand over one of the roses absently, wonders if they’re Billy’s favorite because they’re Steves favorite, because they’re the classic-

Steve should probably be learning a lot more than he was though.

-

Steve actually studies for a few days. Like two, but still. He looks at Billy’s notes multiple times. Actually invests time and energy into learning shit. So, you know, good for him. Good for him, managing to get good enough with Billy to actually reap the benefits of almost-friendship, because honestly maybe they could be friends, right? Maybe.

Hopefully.

Steve kind of likes sitting near Billy now, kind of likes the banter they have going, likes how Billy never makes him feel dumb, even if he calls him dumb...

But he still leaves class right as the bell rings, quick as a whip crack. Steve can barely even get in a ‘goodbye.’

He’s only a little disappointed, but it’s not like he has any reason to care-

He looks down.

Billy's notebook. On the ground in the desk aisle.

It must have fallen out of Billy's backpack on his brisk way out.

Steve scoops it up, shoves it in his backpack, and is out the door without so much as a second thought.

-

The second thoughts kick in when Steve gets home. When he tosses his backpack on his bed and paces around like that's gonna do anything before walking back over and pulling Billy's notebook out and just, Holding it. Looking at it. Feeling overcome with.. Something.

He should open it. No, he shouldn't, it's not his.

But he wants to.

Billy ripped out pages to give him notes, clearly there's stuff in here for Billy's eyes only.

Steve can't help himself.

He opens it.

And honestly, it's pretty standard stuff. Old notes. More commentary that Steve relishes with every new word. A doodle of Bugs Bunny holding a joint that's actually pretty good.

And a half-ripped page in the back that reads:

*"Literally so beautiful it's impossible not to-*

*But I don't think you're a dumbass-*

*I promise. Which is dumb, bec-*

*but I can't help myself. I-*

*wish you knew how -*

wonder if I'm i-

smells good-

Stupid-”

It's a love letter. Steve's dumb, but he's not stupid. No doubt in his mind- this is a love letter.

Steve sits there. Reading the broken up sentences, over and over.

Billy wrote a love letter. Unmistakably his handwriting. Pieces of beautiful ideas about someone Billy is clearly crazy about-

And Steve's heat sinks. Sinks all the way down from its high-falutin place in his throat, pushing at the back of his tongue down, down, into the darkest pit of his stomach. Immediately he knows-

That warm feeling from before? The all consuming too-hot cinnamon and grease feeling from before was not jealousy.

*This* is jealousy.

The idea that Billy cares about someone enough to write them a letter in his perfect pretty collected handwriting makes Steve sick with envy. He just sort of figured *he* was the only person relevant enough to take up Billy's brainspace. Not like anyone else thinks about Steve in any way anymore...

Steve drops the notebook back on his bed like it burned him. He sits on the edge of his bed, tilts his head up to the ceiling, closes his eyes.

Fuck. *Fuck* please dear god why *now*.

Steve wished this was the first time this had happened. The first time he'd stumbled his way into thinking about a *guy* like *that*.

But it wasn't. God he didn't want to have to think about this. He tries *never* to think about this shit. It wasn't like it happened all the time, wasn't like he couldn't just wait for it to go away like he had before.

But it did mean he had to stop talking to Billy *right the fuck now*.

No more copying his notes. No more maybe-hanging out. No more fucking banter in class. Steve needed to crush this... fluke. Before it became anything worse.

But if he was so resolved to *not* think about Billy *like that*, then why couldn't he just get rid of the torn letter?

-

Billy was obviously in a pretty foul mood when Steve saw him at school the next day. He didn't throw Steve a little "hey" or a nod like he'd started doing recently. Didn't even really look up when Steve sat down. Steve figured Billy probably noticed someone stole his notebook which may or may not have had part of a love letter in the back of it and probably wanted to murder and or never again speak to whoever did it, but then again, maybe he just thought it had been lost?

Steve pulled shit out of his backpack in silence, even as their classmates talked around them, and Steve realized that recently, he and Billy had mostly only been talking to each other. Steve would have to go back to passing full days of school in next to silence if Billy found out about the notebook, and just when things were getting good

The classroom door opened.

A girl- Ellen something? was standing in the doorway in a red pleated skirt and one of those headbands with the hearts on springs. She was holding a basket of roses and a couple teddy bears- *Oh my god.*

"Valentine grams-" She was explaining to the teacher. As if Steve's day could not get worse.

The test was going to be postponed for the three excruciating minutes it would take for her to compare notes with the seating chart and one by one hand out Valentines and Steve would just have to sit there wallowing in jealousy and misery.

Steve realized too late that the girl- Ellen... crap, Ellen Studebaker?

He thinks?- little headband hearts bobbing, was walking over to *him*.

“Hi Steve,” Ellen smiled at him, tugging a red rose from her basket and handing it to him like she had probably done a hundred times this week. But he was special, everyone *knew* him.

The class chattered a little more- someone whistled, someone else laughed- Steve might as well have been deaf to all of it. He wasn't expecting a Valentine gram, only managed a “uh, thanks.” to the girl before she bobbed off on her merry way, and the teacher told them all to quiet down.

Steve got a Valentine gram. He had, a lot going on in his head right now. Way more than there usually was. He stayed up to an ungodly hour last night, later than he had since... you know. But he just couldn't sleep, he'd felt like someone coated him in slime and he kept getting up to brush his teeth or pace and try hard as he could not to give in a jerk off-

But now he has this. A little heart shaped piece of paper with glitter and lace glued to it to let him know, some girl out there still thinks about him enough to send him a cheesy valentine. What was that thing Billy had said?

Plenty of bitches in the sea.

God he sounded like such a scumbag. Come to find out the guy writes sappy love letters, Steve could almost laugh. He opened up the little Valentine, carefully sliding the rose upright into his backpack before turning back to read:

*To: Steve Harrington*

*2nd Period Class: Room 48*

*From:*

Last category empty, instead of a name, or a “your secret admirer,” the sender had drawn a heart, with an arrow through it. Cartoonish blood dripped off the arrow's tip.

The swerve of the uppercase S. The line on the H. The tail on the G.

And that stupid shot-through heart.

Steve's own heart rate reached a yet-to-be-possible BPM he'd know that stupid perfect handwriting anywhere. It was Billy's handwriting.

Billy sent this.

For a full couple of seconds, Steve drew a complete blank. Nothing happened, he didn't blink, didn't move, his heart didn't beat, he wasn't even sure he breathed.

Then a million different thoughts came crashing down around his ears- almost made him flinch.

Oh my god *Billy sent this. To him.*

Was this for real? Was this some kind of sick fucked-up-Billy joke? He was just doing it to fuck with Steve's head- but no. Then he probably would have signed it. Or written some random girl's name. Not- not drawn a heart. Like the ones he drew in the margins of his notes,

And if Billy was... you know. That would actually make a lot of sense as to why he was such a fucking douchbag.

But what if he wasn't! God but what if he was.

Did he know about Steve?

But god, there wasn't anything to *know* was there. Steve didn't- he had never-

Shit, they had a test in class right now, and Steve was sitting with an arrow through his chest and little fucking cartoon hearts around his head.

-

It was just like the universe to make Billy's main notebook go missing the day before a big fucking test. It was even more like it to set him up to be running on no hours of sleep and sit down in second period to find those stupid fucking Valentine grams being handed out.



In the split seconds before Steve's name got called, Billy sort of hoped the gram he bought had been lost. They were pretty anonymous to buy, that's what he'd said to himself when he filled one out, folded it up more times than necessary and jammed it in the little heart shaped box. But now, faced with the consequences of his moment of weakness, he could not be filled with more regret.

Harrington just sat there too, looking dumbstruck turning the Valentine over and over before the test started. Like he wasn't a bombshell on the worst of hair days- he didn't even *have* bad hair days.

Billy was determined to not look, not stare at the back of Steve's head like he had every other day this year. But for the split second he looked up, Steve was turned ever so slightly to the side, his perfect nose and perfect forelock illuminated by the sunshine pouring in from dusty classroom windows. He was smelling the rose.

Billy left class as quick as he could, the test was pretty easy, but no doubt Harrington would still be in there struggling for at least ten minutes, which gave Billy more than enough time to cool his nerves before Steve inevitably came to find him at lunch like he'd done for the past couple days, just to say hi.

But he didn't see Steve at lunch. Probably should be a relief, but Billy couldn't help but feel his heart sinking a little. And then kicking himself for caring *at all* when really he shouldn't. This was nothing, just like all the other times.

Billy went to switch textbooks at his locker, more of a nerd move than he would usually allow himself but he wanted to at the very least have an okay school day.

But when he went to open his backpack, there was his notebook. He did a double take. He could have *sworn* the thing was missing. He had dumped his backpack out and turned it inside out on his bedroom floor, got pencil shavings all over the place in the process, and it wasn't there.

But now here it was. Billy opened it.

A note fell out.

*"I took your notebook- sorry. Here's it and the notes back. Probably be easier to study together sometime anyway. If you're still down.*

*Thanks for the rose."*

Billy probably had six separate heart attacks in the span of the couple seconds it took to read the note over again. Then he laughed out loud, in the heart-splattered hallway right in front of his locker, didn't care if anyone looked at him weird.

*"Thanks for the rose."*